

Herbert Hoover National Historic Site

General Management Plan

Alternative B

Concept:

This alternative would emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. Natural and cultural resources would serve as symbols of significant events and influences on the character and career of this great American. The interpretation program would provide the public with opportunities to use the historic site's tangible resources to make personal connections to the significance of the Hoover story. The NPS would collaborate with partners such as the Hoover Presidential Library to create a comprehensive experience for visitors to gain understanding of the resources and significance of the complex. The landscape and visitor facilities would support a commemorative-like atmosphere with opportunities for the public to spend time reflecting upon the life and significance of Herbert Hoover.



The following pages describe management prescriptions for each management zone.

Commemorative Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would manage resources and provide visitor experiences to emphasize the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would preserve, protect, and maintain cultural resources in good condition with a rehabilitation treatment. A highly designed setting for the resources would encourage personal reflection on the meaning of Hoover's life. Visitors would consider cultural resources as symbols of the various influences of Hoover's childhood upon his character and public accomplishments. Visitors would have a high probability of encountering staff in the Birthplace Cottage. They would have a moderate probability of meeting staff in other areas. Although visitors would have a high probability of encountering many other visitors, opportunities would exist for personal contemplation and solitude. Pedestrian and vehicular facilities would provide visitor access to cultural resources. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing would take place in this zone. Recreational bicycling would take place only on established roads. Special events supporting the commemoration of Herbert Hoover would take place only in areas that do not jeopardize natural or cultural resources, especially the dignity of the Birthplace Cottage and the Gravesite.

Resource Management

Preservation and rehabilitation of the cultural landscape would support and enhance the commemorative nature of the Site as proposed in the *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*. The cultural landscape would provide tangible symbols of Hoover's life in West Branch to help visitors understand the intangible meanings within those symbols. Interpretation would explain the development of the entire commemorative landscape. Visitors would view the Gravesite, the HHPL, the statue of Isis, and other features as components of the commemorative landscape. They would understand that the contrived historic neighborhood along Downey Street represents a commemoration of the influence of Hoover's neighborhood on his childhood development rather than an accurate depiction of the area during Hoover's youth.

The NPS would make changes to the landscape only to enhance the landscape's commemorative nature. It would keep the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the HHPL, and other key components of the landscape free from any development or activity except commemorative use.

The NPS would follow the recommendation of the *Herbert Hoover National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report* to preserve or rehabilitate historic structures to support and enhance the commemorative nature of the Historic Site. The NPS would prepare a study to evaluate the existing conditions of all historic structures. The study would include design guidelines for the preservation of the exteriors of the structures and the rehabilitation of the interiors.

The use of historic structures for employee housing would continue as an effective means to preserve and maintain them. The preservation of the structures provides significant support to the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS will provide employee housing for staff with responsibility to make immediate responses to after-hours situations involving the protection of visitors, resources, or facilities; and staff with responsibility for keeping Parkside Drive open during winter storms. As each structure becomes vacant, management would evaluate its future use. If a structure lies in the 100-year regulatory flood area, the NPS would take appropriate mitigating action to continue its use as employee housing.

Interpretation

Interpretation would support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover through programs that provide opportunities for visitors to contemplate the overall significance of Hoover's life, accomplishments, and contributions to the world. Visitors would receive an understanding of the commemorative nature of the cultural landscape, historic structures, and facilities.

Paid staff and volunteers would offer interpretive services at the principle resources of the Historic Site including the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, Blacksmith Shop, and the Schoolhouse. Guided tours of the historic core area, West Branch, and the Prairie would emphasize the commemorative nature and meaning of the Historic Site.

A system of wayside exhibits and the existing audio stations would emphasize the commemorative nature of the Historic Site. Un-staffed museum exhibits at the P.T. Smith House would explain the symbolic importance of the adjacent "House of the Maples" site in relation to Hoover's family life and personal tragedies in West Branch.

While focusing on Hoover, the Historic Site also would present interpretation programs related to the overall mission of the NPS and its special emphasis programs appropriate to the Historic Site's resources.

Ongoing surveys of visitor satisfaction with interpretive programming and the level of understanding of interpretive themes would determine if the Historic Site would need to develop capacities for any of its interpretive programs.

Interpretation would explain the decisions made from 1935-1966 to rehabilitate and relocate historic structures at the Historic Site to provide symbols for the meaning associated with the life and character of President Hoover. Interpretation also would explain why structures with little direct connection to Hoover came to the site as symbols of important aspects of Hoover's childhood development. For example, interpretation at the Blacksmith Shop would emphasize family values of hard work, perseverance, and achievement rather than the craft of forging hot iron into tools.

The NPS would use wayside exhibits, historic plantings, and construction of a fence around the site of the “House of the Maples” to emphasize the significance of the site as a symbol of Hoover's loss of his parents. Museum exhibits in the P.T. Smith House would interpret the “House of the Maples” with an emphasis on how Hoover's family life in West Branch influenced his character, careers, and public life.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon cultural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the Birthplace Cottage, the Friends Meetinghouse, the Schoolhouse, and the Blacksmith Shop would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would rehabilitate the P.T. Smith House for special exhibits on the first floor and storage on the second floor.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would rehabilitate the Varney House for offices and storage.

The visitor center, Varney House, C.E. Smith House, and the Garvin House would provide space for offices.

Natural Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would provide a natural, spacious setting to support the commemoration of Herbert Hoover. The NPS would manage natural resources to meet all applicable laws, policies, and management standards to preserve, but it would not fully restore the ecosystem. Visitors would have the opportunity to experience the influence of the natural world on Herbert Hoover's life through interpretation, contemplation, and recreation. They would experience opportunities for personal exploration and discovery. They would have a low probability of encountering staff or other visitors with a high degree of solitude. Simple footpaths would provide access. A modest amount of interpretive programs and media would promote understanding. Recreational walking and cross-country skiing would occur in this zone.

Resource Management

The NPS would recognize that the small size of the prairie reconstruction would encumber its complete restoration as a functional ecosystem without a very significant

investment of fiscal and human resources. The NPS, therefore, would not attempt to restore a complete prairie ecosystem, but it would manage the prairie community in a manner that would complement the spacious, commemorative setting of the Historic Site. The prairie also would provide a natural boundary between the Historic Site and Interstate Highway 80 and other modern distractions.

The NPS would continue its present natural resource management actions including prescribed burns of sections of the prairie to improve populations of native grasses and forbs, and suppress the growth of invasive plants. The NPS would continue to monitor the prairie for undesirable exotic or invasive species. It would control such growth by localized treatments. The NPS would use seeding of prairie species to assist the natural diversification of the plant community. The NPS would not reintroduce animal species to the prairie, but would consider animal species that colonize the prairie in any management decisions.

The NPS would assess the impact of existing culverts, roads, and bridges on stream stability and potential flooding. The NPS would determine what modifications to the Historic Site's infrastructure, the streambed of "Hoover Creek", and associated riparian areas would mitigate flood damage to park resources. The NPS would implement actions that benefit both the natural resources and the commemorative nature of the Historic Site.

Interpretation

The NPS would use interpretation to help the public understand and appreciate the prairie and "Hoover Creek" as symbols of nature's influence upon Hoover's childhood development and value system.

Interpretation along the creek would compare and contrast the condition of this feature and its associated resources during Hoover's childhood and today.

Wayside exhibits installed along the prairie trails would provide opportunities for quiet and contemplative visitor experiences linked to the commemorative nature of the prairie.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

To recognize and mitigate adverse impacts of visitation upon natural resources, the NPS would document baseline conditions of resources; then periodically monitor and record resource conditions. Conditions of the prairie and creek would receive primary emphasis. If public use appeared to jeopardize any resources, the NPS would modify its interpretation and/or resource management programs to mitigate the problem.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

Hardened service roads would pass through this zone to connect the maintenance facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

None.

Development Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would welcome visitors with a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, HHPL, HPLA, and City of West Branch. A new Orientation Center would offer visitors a variety of quality orientation and interpretive experiences. Visitors would have a nearly constant interaction with other people. They would have a high probability of encountering staff responsive to their need for information. They would have almost no opportunity for quiet and solitude. This zone would not contain any significant natural or cultural resources. While the natural setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive management, development would have a low impact on nearby natural or cultural resources, especially the view from the Gravesite. The design of the facility would attract the attention of motorists on Parkside Drive, but express great sensitivity to the natural landscape. Landscaping would include only native species. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. The intensively maintained orientation Center would provide a safe and aesthetic work environment for staff. Its minimal physical footprint would remain responsive to its orientation and interpretation functions. To the greatest degree practical, the Center would represent a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones.

Resource Management

Natural resources would undergo substantial modification and intensive management with a high degree of landscaping.

Interpretation

The NPS would work with officials of the HPLA, HHPL, and the City of West Branch to ensure that visitors at the Orientation Center receive a comprehensive orientation to the Historic Site, the HHPL, and the City of West Branch. Orientation would emphasize the commemorative relationship between the Historic Site, the HHPL, and West Branch, as well as the significance of the Birthplace Cottage, HHPL, and Gravesite.

The Orientation Center would provide information services, orientation exhibits, museum exhibits, an interpretive film, publications, and a cooperating association sales area. The sales area would emphasize the connection between Hoover's boyhood and his later accomplishments, and the symbolic importance of various sites and structures in relation to Hoover's childhood development. Exhibits would explain the significant role of the

Hoover family, citizens of West Branch, and other people in establishing the Historic Site.

The NPS would relocate the Travelers Information System to the Orientation Center to continue to broadcast an orientation message to travelers on Interstate 80 a few miles east or west of West Branch. The message would include an introduction to the commemorative nature of the Historic Site.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The Orientation Center would include parking and traffic/pedestrian circulation. A single-lane, one-way paved street would connect the Center with the HHPL. Sidewalks would connect the Orientation Center to the HHPL, the Downey Street trace, and the Isaac Miles Farm. Although the Orientation Center would provide a few parking spaces for recreational vehicles and buses, most would park in the Water Street parking lot. If a need for overflow parking developed in the future, the NPS would expand the Water Street parking lot to the south in the recreation area.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

The NPS would build an Orientation Center including an information/fee collection desk, orientation exhibits, cooperating association sales and storage areas, theater, public rest rooms, staff offices, and a parking lot for cars and recreational vehicles or buses. The Center's design would have minimum impact on the Isaac Miles Farm or the Commemorative Zone.

The NPS would construct a single-lane, one-way street to connect Parkside Drive to the Orientation Center Parking Lot to the HHPL. The NPS would work closely with the HHPL to ensure that the new street facilitated entry into the HHPL's parking lot. Design of the street would take special care to minimize impacts on the natural environment. New sidewalks would connect the Center with the HHPL, the Downey Street trace, and the Isaac Miles Farm. The NPS would work closely with the HPLA to ensure that the new street and sidewalks do not affect their property and their operation.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would maintain the Orientation Center. The Center would contain a small amount of office and storage space for staff operating and maintaining the Center. The NPS would install necessary utility systems to support the Center.

Maintenance Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide a safe, low-profile location for the Historic Site's maintenance operations. Although the setting would undergo substantial modification and intensive

management, the design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the Thompson Farm buildings. The facility would harmonize with the setting of the adjacent zones. Where feasible, the facility would employ rehabilitated farm structures. The physical footprint of structures and stored materials would remain minimal. This zone would include hardened circulation and parking areas. To the greatest degree practical, the facility would serve as a model of best management practices and sustainable development. The facility would contain and mitigate the impact of pollutants, storm-water runoff, and other disturbances on adjacent zones. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would encounter staff conducting maintenance functions. They rarely would encounter other visitors. The facility's landscaping would limit its visual and auditory impact upon visitors in adjacent zones while creating a harmonious setting with adjacent natural resources. Landscaping would include only native species.

Resource Management

Where feasible, the new Maintenance Facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The design of new buildings would remain compatible with the rhythm, order, circulation, and character defining features of the farm. The NPS would stabilize farm buildings not suitable or feasible for use in the Maintenance Facility.

Interpretation

No active interpretation would take place in this area of limited incidental visitor access.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

None.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would establish a centralized Maintenance Facility in this zone. This facility would include space for offices, shops, a small parking lot, and storage for vehicles, equipment, and supplies. Where feasible, the new Maintenance Facility would employ rehabilitated structures at the Thompson Farm. The NPS would move a prefabricated building in the existing maintenance facility to the new location. New construction of buildings would supplement the existing structures and the prefabricated building. The NPS would construct hardened service roads to connect the Maintenance Facility with the Loop Road and with the Herbert Hoover Highway.

The NPS would install utilities necessary to support the new maintenance facility.

Open Space Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide an open, spacious atmosphere to support the commemorative setting of the Historic Site. Natural Resources would remain in a highly manipulated condition as agricultural fields or as maintained groundcover vegetation. This area would not contain any significant cultural resources. Vegetation would include non-native species. Only limited, incidental visitor access would occur in this zone with no visitor facilities, trails, services, or programs. Visitors would rarely encounter other people. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance functions.

Resource Management

The NPS would continue to manage the section of this zone adjacent to Parkside Drive as maintained ground cover including non-native grass species. It would manage the section of this zone adjacent to the Thompson Farm buildings as agricultural land or as low-maintenance ground cover. This would enhance the open, spacious area of the Commemoration Zone.

Interpretation

None.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

Visitors would have only incidental access to this zone. The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks in the section of this zone adjacent to Parkside Drive.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

None.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

This zone would not have any offices or maintenance facilities. A hardened service road would connect the new Maintenance Facility to the Herbert Hoover Highway. Existing utilities would remain.

Special Use Zone

Desired Resource Conditions, Visitor Experiences, and Facilities

This zone would include facilities operated or controlled by other governmental agencies or private interests on lands within the boundary of the Historic Site. The HHPL, the Federal Building, and the Administrative Building for the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association, Inc., all support the public's understanding and appreciation of President Hoover. Visitors would have access to the HHPL and the Federal Building where they would have a high probability of encountering other visitors. Visitor experiences would include unstaffed museum exhibits, an interpretive film, information desks, a sales area, and visitor convenience facilities. Buildings would dominate natural resources. The design of the east façade of the HHPL represents a significant cultural resource as a tangible connection to President Hoover. The intensively designed and maintained buildings would provide safe and aesthetic work environments for staff.

Resource Management

The NPS would ensure the maintenance of the Visitor Center in a clean, safe, and welcoming condition.

Interpretation

The NPS would convert space in the Visitor Center presently used for orientation and cooperating association sales into unstaffed exhibits or other interpretive uses.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain or reduce the Visitor Center Parking Lot. If special events or periods of high visitation would fill parking areas, the NPS would direct visitors to alternative parking areas off-site.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

In the existing visitor center, the NPS would install unstaffed orientation exhibits in the present lobby. It would convert the special exhibit room into a staff office and workspace. It would maintain or reduce the size of the Visitor Center parking lot.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

The NPS would convert the special exhibit room in the Visitor Center into additional office and staff workspace. Public rest rooms, the employee break room, workroom, conference room, research library, and a storage area would remain in the building.

Recreation Zone

Desired Resource Conditions and Visitor Experiences

This zone would provide visitors and local residents with facilities and opportunities for safe recreational activities that do not relate to the commemoration of President Hoover. Activities would include picnicking, kite flying, softball, badminton, volleyball, cross-country skiing, and recreational walking. This zone would include a designated public assembly area for First Amendment activities. Social and group activities would result in a moderate degree of contact with other visitors. Visitors would have a high degree of contact with other visitors during special events and First Amendment activities. Contact with staff would remain limited to employees conducting maintenance and protection functions. Visitors would have safe, accessible, and enjoyable experiences. They would have a low opportunity for solitude. No significant cultural resources would occur in this zone. Natural resources would remain in a highly designed and manipulated condition. Vegetation would include non-native species. Facilities would include picnic shelters and tables, restrooms, drinking fountains, paved sidewalks, and a parking area.

Resource Management

After removal of the buildings in the present Maintenance Facility, the NPS would rehabilitate and re-vegetate the area as green space.

The NPS would monitor the condition of the historic Boy Scout picnic shelter to determine the impact of unrestricted public use. If the studies concluded that such use represented a long-term threat to the structure, the NPS would limit use of the shelter.

The landscape in this zone would remain highly manipulated and intensively maintained including the use of non-native species of grass. The NPS would continue to care for the trees and mow the lawns on a regular basis. The landscaping would complement the open, spacious setting of the Commemorative Zone.

Interpretation

The NPS would present interpretive programs to complement special events held in this zone.

Visitor Capacity and Circulation

The NPS would maintain existing sidewalks.

Visitor Facilities to be Expanded, Removed, or Restricted

If picnic use increased, the NPS would install additional picnic tables.

Offices, Maintenance Facilities, and Utilities

Upon relocation of the Maintenance Facility, the NPS would remove all buildings in the present maintenance facility area. Utilities in the other areas of this zone would remain.

General Prescriptions for this Alternative

Adjacent Land Use

The NPS would encourage the City of West Branch to adopt and follow growth policies and zoning compatible with the open and spacious setting of the Historic Site. Areas of particular attention would include properties on Downey Street, Wetherell Street, Parkside Drive, and in areas along the northwest boundary proposed for residential and commercial development.

Partners

Education programs, presented in an offsite facility owned by the HPLA, would highlight significant lessons from Hoover's life in West Branch. Programs would employ the Historic Site's cultural and natural resources.

The NPS would work actively with the HHPL, the HPLA, the Hoover family, the City of West Branch, and local school districts to support the commemoration of Hoover through public programs, education programs, special exhibits, and special events.

Staffing

The Historic Site's staffing level would reflect an emphasis on interpretation and cultural resource management. It would maintain adequate staff to manage and protect cultural and natural resources.

Signs

Signs on Parkside Drive would mark the entrance to the Orientation Center, the Visitor Center Parking Lot, and the Water Street Parking Lot. Directional signs at Parkside Drive and the Orientation Center Parking Lot would guide vehicular traffic down the new one-way street to the HHPL and the Gravesite. Directional signs would guide pedestrians from the Orientation Center to the Downey Street trace, the HHPL, the Birthplace Cottage, the Gravesite, the Isaac Miles Farm, the Prairie, and other features of the Commemorative Zone.

Boundary Adjustments

The NPS would not propose any adjustments to its boundary.

Summary of Needed and Allowable Changes

Management Zone	Needed or Allowable Changes
Commemorative Zone	Rehabilitate Varney House for office space Develop wayside exhibits Conduct additional education programs at HPLA facility Rehabilitate PT Smith House for exhibits and storage
Natural Zone	Continue prescribed fire program Conduct study and take measures to stabilize stream-banks Initiate inventory and monitoring program of natural resources
Development Zone	Construct new Orientation Center Install appropriate landscaping and parking Relocate Travelers Information Station to Orientation Center
Maintenance Zone	Relocate Maintenance Facility to Thompson farm
Open Space Zone	Establish and maintain open space ground in the Thompson Farm fields.
Special Use Zone	Rehabilitate Visitor Center for unstaffed exhibits and additional offices.
Recreation Zone	Remove existing maintenance buildings Rehabilitate and re-vegetate area

COSTS

Because of the conceptual nature of this plan, the following cost estimates remain very general. They provide one means for comparing the various alternatives. Future design planning will prepare detailed cost estimates.

Development Costs

Maintenance Facility:	\$ 3,062,800
Orientation Center:	\$ 1,223,900
Street from Center to Loop Road	\$ 162,200
Visitor Center Rehabilitation:	\$ 180,300
P.T. Smith House Rehabilitation:	\$ 139,200
Varney House Rehabilitation:	\$ 87,700
Wayside Exhibits:	\$ 61,000

Total	\$ 4,917,100
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Additional Operating Costs

The Orientation Center, new Maintenance Facility, rehabilitated P.T. Smith House, rehabilitated Varney House, and rehabilitated Visitor Center would cost approximately \$10,000 a year to maintain. The 7.67 additional FTE of operations staff would require an annual cost of \$287,000.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Additional Studies and Plans

This alternative would require additional design planning for the Orientation Center, parking lot, and sidewalks; the street connecting Parkside Drive to the Orientation Center to the HHPL; the new Maintenance Facility; rehabilitation of the visitor center; rehabilitation of the P.T. Smith House; and rehabilitation of the Varney House. This additional planning would include detailed project costs, resource impacts, and actions necessary to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Historic Preservation Act.

- Long Range Interpretation Plan/Comprehensive Interpretation Plan
- Education Plan
- Museum Exhibit Plan
- Wayside Exhibit Plan
- Historic Resource Study
- Cultural Landscape Management Plan
- Historic Structure Reports and Structural Analyses for the Isaac Miles Farm Barn and the Isaac Miles Farm House.
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Natural Resources
- Baseline Inventory of Existing Conditions of Cultural Resources
- Design Guidelines for the Preservation and Rehabilitation of Historic Structures
- Administrative History